Ita Tenebrae Sleut Lux. BY JAMES KENT STONE.

Eve is now her shades extending,
Night, obscure and dread, descending,
Darkness shrouds the earth and skies;
Glorious from Thy bright dominions,
Bearing health upon Thy pinions,
Rise, O Son of Justice, Rise!

Care and grief have long oppressed me, Sin made weary and distressed me, While sweet hope dwells far apart; Come, and shed on me Thy gladness, Lift, dear Lord, this cloud of sadness. Thou who God and goodness art!

Wings, O! quickly might I borrow, Rising, dove like, care and sorrow, Fautt, affliction leaving far, Swift to Thee my flight were given; Safe at length in that dear haven, Peace in full my soul should share.

Thou who rulest high in glory,
Turning yet to our poor story,
With a Father's tenderness,
Help thy child, so spent, so needy,
And his thirsting heart with speedy
Bounteous peace, O Father, bless! Thou each hidden pathway knowest;
And the guardian care Thou showest
Day and night with us remains;
Prove me, search my innest spirit;
Aided by Thy supreme merit,
Who shall rashly cause me pains!

will

abili-

mless

III.

TIN

Box.

HALL RUS-BER ER

DGES

badges e dis-he

plies

galia of gns and ork, and ompt at-

EY

, QUE

y of the A. will be on receipt by dozen, Address Catholic of.

siness of offered for re. Situralles from ore. Post ic church ic desirable eman with ess Post-847-13

CE.

S

When mine eyes have known the vision Of Thy strength, those choirs Elysian Hovering near, shall safety bring; Nought in night shall more be tearful, Resting in thy light all cheefful, baylour, Lord, and Heavenly King!

THE PASSION PLAY AT OBER-AMMERGAU.

It has been burningly hot in Munich. The streets are full of white glare and a white, impalpable dust that puffs up under every footstep and insiguates its stiff grittiness into every thread of one's garments, every pore of one's The little stuffy red velvet-lined railway carriages are small torture ovens under the fierce August sun as the train runs through the level land. Even when it begins to climb an up ward grade toward the mountains the heat does not lessen. It passes Lake Starnberg, where the mad King Ludwig found his death, mounts and mounts, giving a glimpse here and there of a far away wreath of snow on a distant alp, and at 5 o'clock draws up at the little town of Oberau in the Bavarian Tyrol. Crowds dismount, flushed and fatigued. Crowds dismount, flushed and fatigued, and hurry away to the waiting vehicles that are to transport them to the mountain village where the Saviour's Passion will be enacted to morrow.

Formerly the way up was rough and perilous, but the Government has spent half a million in manufacturing a broad, handsome highway through the hills, and now the ascent through the pure, cold air is pleasant and speedy. Many peasants go by on foot, having come great distances and denied themselves much to earn the time and money nas for them the sacredness of a religious pilgrimage. The road rises through heavily wooded mountains that echo with the wild voices of thin white streams, dropping from ladars. ledge, and leads at last to flowery mountain meadows through which

sion, the residence this summer of the great Catholic nobleman, the Marquis the play, and the surplus devoted to season to the study of the play, and has his house full of an ever-chang ing succession of guests who come for the same purpose. Two or three miles farther on, at the head of this valley, is Oberammergau, swarming with new arrivals of all classes. The little low houses of stone are all lime washed and in some cases entirely covered with charming designs done in encaustic fresco — on the burgomaster's house loops and garlands of colored ribbons, wreaths of flowers and painted pillars and frieze; but on humbler dwellings somewhat rude pictures of a madonna or saint guarding the portal. Also in the walls of some of the houses are set little shrines under glass - nearly every mile of the road upward having been marked by wayside crucifixes, carved and colored with great skill, for the villagers' chief support is from their carvings, and they spare no pains in beautifying these guide posts to heaven, where they may pause and lift up their hearts as they pass. Hap-

The streets are crowded with many English, Americans, French, Germans, representatives of half the nations of Europe, and Bavarians and Tyrolese from all the country round about.

All is as primitive as it was

when the outer world first found-some

with full petticoats, bodices laced over white chemises, and a dark green handkerchief bound tight about their hair — stalwart, robust females, with gentle, bovine faces, and clear red in their brown cheeks. The men are even better to look at-tall and finely made, their bright blue eyes and sunny beards contrasting well with their wholesome sunburnt skins. Their feet are thrust stockingless into heavy nailshod shoes, but over the leg is drawn a knitted woollen legging that leaves knee and ankle bare. The blossoms of the edelweiss gathered at the edge of the upper snows. Now and then one of the actors in tomorrow's play goes by; generally to be distinguished by long waving hair upon the shoulders and something quite noticeable of dignity and grace in feature and carriage. A very large proportion of the village takes part in the drama, some five hundred persons being needed in the representation of to morrow. Heine was sure the women of Italy had grown more beautiful and statuesque because of the unconscious impressions of form and grace made upon them by the multitude of sculptures in a country that has known three thousand years of art, and Wordsworth believed of his rustic maid who had listened to the quie tunes of the hidden brooks, that

The beauty born of murmuring sound Had passed into her face."

Some such thoughts drift through one's mind seeing the faces of these peasant players on the eve of the enacting of the great Passion. Two hundred years of constant study of the tragedy of Judea, of merging their identity in those of the Founder of Christian-ity, of deep personal absorption in the every word of Christ's utterance, two centuries of brooding upon the gospels, has in some strange way physically transfigured these German mountaineers and elevated them far above their neighbors to be distinguished at once by a high seriousness of mien, by spirituality of expression, and much fineness and beauty of type, such as is not to be found elsewhere in people of their There has never been a question of

any sordid motives in the matter. The actors receive no remuneration for their work save the equivalent of their day's earnings, whatever they may be, at other labor. For the Sunday representation they are not paid at all, but as they act both Monday and Wednesday twice a month for six ceived during the entire season but \$100. No attempt is made to speculate curves the swift, clear current of the upon needs of the visitors and a uni-At the entrance to these meadows stands the village of Ettal—a half-dozen houses clustered about a big white monastery, now transformed into a brewery. Farther along, under the shadow of a peak, lies a charming chalet of considerable size and pretension, the residence this summer of the theatre, the costumes and properties of form price is charged for board and theatre, the costumes and properties of great Catholic nobleman, the Marquis of Bute, who has devoted nearly the beautifying the village church and founding a school of wood-carving for

the instruction of the villagers. Oberammergau, it seems, from the very earliest times has had a miracle play, but these plays varied from time to time and resembled such as were acted all over Christian Europe by the monks or under their tutelage. When monks or under their tutelage the Thirty Years' war raged through Germany the mystery was abandoned, for the peaceful life of the mountains became too disturbed and unsettled to permit of its continuance. Shortly before its close a pestilence fell upon the land, and though all the neighboring towns were scourged Oberammergau by means of a strict quarantine managed to fence it out, until a certain Caspar Schuchler evaded the guard and slipped into the village to see his wife and child. In two days he was dead of the plague and in less than a month half of his fellow-townsmen had followed him. Human aid was useless, and the villagers lifted their eyes to heaven, and vowed that pily, no attempt has been made to build hotels or to in any way change or mar the Old World simplicity of the little The plague was stayed, and every decade since the peasants have acted the drama with solemn reverence and forty years ago—this wonderful drama being played among the mountains. It would seem as if a sacred virtue in the play had kept the people sweet and devotion, and living thus always in the white light of Christ's life have taken on an outward manifestation of spirituality very rare and beautiful. Until some forty or fifty years ago the untainted from outside vulgarization and inspired them with a highminded unworldliness that served the play was still one of the old mysteries, same function as a fine and artistic with all of their mediæval naivete and taste. Visitors lodge in the houses of the peasants, which are clean and of farce, such as the dead Judas being comfortable, and while they are here seized by the devil, who pulled out of share the humble character of their him long strings of sausages. At that time the young priest Daisenberger, fresh from his classical studies in the

Handsome people these last; women and from it he has entirely swept him further than he meant to go peraway all trace of the Middle Age mystery and substituted a great Hebrew play set in a Greek frame. He induced the villagers to transfer the play from the church-yard, where it had formerly been enacted, to an erant ecclesiastic that is still common open-air theatre, arranged according to the classic plan; he introduced a chorus to explain and comment, and preceded each act by a tableau from the Old Testament, in which is prophetically shadowed forth some detail of the great fulfilment. To this work he devoted his entire life, and when short green breeches do not reach the knee, and the waistcoat and packet are heavy with big silver buttons. They all wear green Tyroleen hats, in the band of which is thrust a bunch of cocks' plumes or the waistcoat at a bunch of cocks' plumes or the waist and perfected the greatest drama of modern times. Somewhat too formal, too elaborate, too classic in thrust a bunch of cocks' plumes or the waist and water the world had begun to discover that under his tutelage these passants had perfected the greatest drama of modern times. Somewhat too formal, too elaborate, too classic in thrust a bunch of cocks' plumes or form he has made it, but through it all shines out the majestic humanity of the story, and from 8 in the morning till 6 in the evening six thousand people sit without fatigue or impatience—indeed, in breathless interest—and shudder and weep to-gether over the tragedy of the Atonement as set forth by these humble,

> are awakened by the music of the village band passing from street to street, and the voice of church bells cailing all to early Sunday Mass. The church is crowded, and even the churchyard is full of kneeling worconfession the previous afternoon, and to great danger and trial, but puts are now given the Sacrament. By half-past seven the whole village is streaming toward the theatre—a great wooden pavilion, about two thirds of the seats being under cover. The stage, like in every detail to the stage as arranged by the Greeks, with the seats nearest it under the open sky, has a background of wooded peaks, amid which the early mists are still curled, and blue heavens. Not far away to the left, in plain view, is seen on an eminence the great marble crucifix and group of women given to Oberammergau by King Ludwig.

At 5 in the morning the visitors

The unseen orchestra plays a fine old Gregorian chant and there files in from the two sides the chorus of men and women, dressed in long tunics of white, long red cloaks, and with gold crowns upon their heads. They sing the prologue. Many have noble voices The men are handsome and stately and the women, with their gold crowns, the flaxen hair and bright cheeks, look like quaint madonnas and saints out of the early pictures. fore the centre portion of the stage hangs a curtain, which now rises and shows Adam and Eve being driven from Eden with a flaming sword, and a serpent wound about the tree of life. Again the curtain rises and shows children, women and angels grouped adoringly about the cross. The chorus retires; a multitude pours upon the stage from every quarter, bearing palm branches and singing hosannas to the man who rides upon an ass in their midst—a very remarkable figure clothed in a gray gown, with a crimson peasant, but of a peasant transfigured and uplifted by a sort of reverent ecstasy of emotion. About him are grouped his disciples; John the believe to loved leading the ass—hardly—more loved leading the ass—hardly—more than a box with a search feet framed. than a boy, with a scraph face framed in waving locks, and garments of the clear red and green seen in cathedral windows—a tangle-haired lowering-faced Judas in two shades of yellow; a gray-haired sturdy Saint Peter. The gray-haired sturdy Saint Peter. costuming is beautiful, all in simple clear colors like stained glass, massing with most harmonious and beautiful effects.

There has been a general tension felt throughout the great crowd be-fore this entry. It seemed bold and half sacrilegious that any one should attempt to impersonate the Saviour, but not the most sensitive feels that h can object to the holy dignity in the air of this man who seems to say : do not pretend to give you the illusion that I am the Christ. I only humbly walk in His garments and repeat to you His words

Then comes the scene of the driving of the money-changers from the Temple, in which flocks of doves from the overturned cages take swift flight toward their homes in the village After Christ has passed out with His disciples the enraged traders endeavor to stir up the people against Him and a meeting of the Sanhedrim is called. The next tableau is of the sons of Jacob plotting against Joseph, and the act is occupied with the stormy session of the Sanhedrim, over which presides a superbold high priest in white silk and green velvet embroidered with gold. It is the Burgomaster Lang, gold. whose beautiful young daughter has been trained from her childhood for the part she takes to day of the Virgin

Strangely real does this representa-tion make the story of the gospels. This Caiaphas ceases to be a cruel shadow and becomes the dignified chief of the Jewish councile, who has law, respectability, religious expediency, common sense on his side; and only a Nazarene peasant who has blasphemed the law and outraged the daily order of

haps; the refusal of the Roman gover nor to be dictated to inflames his proud temper and persuades him to carry out his intention at all hazards; but one finds he is only the same type of intolenough to day. And with this sudden light of humanity thrown upon the picture, the Passion becomes a real, vivid, intense tragedy. One's heart begins to beat quicker. All the great audience sits without murmur or movement and follows the story with eager, Nicodemus and hushed interest. Nicodemus and Joseph of Arimathea rise and leave the council, refusing to be party to the Sanhedrim's purpose.

The two tableaux represent the de-parture of Tobias, and the lamentation of the bride, in the Song of Solomon, for the absent bridegroom. In this act Christ sups at Bethany and Mary Mag-dalene pours the ointment upon His head. There is a sense of sadness and apprehension upon them all, and the devil enters into Judas, who, the treas-urer of the party, sees the bag empty, the hope of earthly kingdom for his master vanishing, and some tragedy evidently approaching. He has abandoned his trade, fallen out of favor with his people and the priests, and now the man for whom he has made these sacrifices seems to hope for noth-ing but shame and death. He is sullen and enraged, and feels himself de-ceived and tricked. Christ, departing, takes leave of His mother and His shippers who follow the service ecived and tricked. Christ, departing, shippers who follow the service takes leave of His mother and His through the open doors and windows. All the chief performers have been to friends, telling them plainly He goes and tricked. By their remonstrance with such high courage that they, weeping and awed,

let Him go. The sixth tableau typifies the doom of Jerusalem in the re-jection of Vashti and the raising of Esther to her place, and act opens with Christ's prophecy of her fate and that of her people. Then He sends forth John and Peter to make ready for the Passover. Judas, left alone, is approached by the envoy of the high priests, who wish to learn from one of the disciples where his master is likely to be found at night, when his arrest will not arouse popular excitement. Angry and bitter, a short struggle with himself ensues. If this Jesus is what He pretends, He can easily deliver Himself from His ene-If He cannot, then He deserves mies. nothing better. In any case this great sum offered by the priests means

wealth for him. The new tableaux, very beautiful ones, typify the bread and wine of the Last Supper in the giving of the manua, and the return of the spies with the cluster of grapes. The act shows the Last Supper in the upper chamber, copied in its setting and grouping from Da Vinci's famous picture-as indeed are all scenes and tableaux copied as far as possible from famous paintings of the Passion— principally Albrecht Durer's The disciples drink and eat of the Communion and Christ washes their feet, this scene being acted with such pure and lofty solemnity that the audience holds its breath and the tears are in all eyes. After which follows the agony in the before His spirit has found that high peace and patience that support Him through two days of anguish and persecution.

It is 1 o'clock now. The sky has grown gray and dreary and the hills are veiled in mist. There is an intermission of an hour for dinner. No one seems fatigued after this long five hours of attention, but everywhere one hears people saying to one another: "What do you think of it?" And the

answer always is: "I don't know what to think. It is very strange, very remarkable. One feels no sense of irreverence. But where do these obscure peasants learn to act like this? One feels as if they were moving in some holy dream.

The theatre empties and fills itself again in an hour — the audience re-turning eagerly, and hushed in an in-stant upon the return of the chorus. An English Bishop is there with all his family, many priests, some women in the garments of an Order, a party of boys hardly in their twenties, have come on a walking tour through the mountains - jolly enough on most occasions, but very serious, very quiet to day. French women exquisitely to day. French women exquisitely dressed, peasants with their heads bound in handkerchiefs, all grave and eager.

Christ is brought before Annas, is hustled and insulted and carried to Ciaphas, silent always, with pale pati-ence and dignity. The high priest regards Him with bitter curiosity and is enraged at His silence, sending Him to the guard-room until the council can be summoned. Then follow the scenes of Peter's denial, and of Judas's hideous, torturing remorse when he finds that his Master is consenting to The man acts with a frightful passion of earnestness and has had offers this season from the managers of various theatres, but says he cannot simulate a feeling; he is feeling what he does here — remorse, terrible beat-ings against powers he has set in motion and cannot check.

Then comes the trial before Pilate, a

dignified, noble Roman, reluctant to be | cuit of the path laid out for him. party to this infamy, though his hands are tied. The man has been convicted by the Jewish law and has no word to say in his own defence; only the gov ernor's acquiescence in the usual legal processes is needed. But he struggles hard to save the man from the mob's fury; struck, perhaps, by the aspect of this bruised, beaten creature, sinking with fatigue, but clinging, speech less, with white face and trembling body, to some great purpose. He tries all arts, sends Him to Herod, and finally yields, crying out with terrible unconscious prophecy, "His blood be unconscious prophecy, "His blood be on your heads!" to which the mob an-swers exultingly, "On ours and on our children's !'

The tableaux here are of the bringing of Joseph's bloody coat, and of the offering up of Isaac on Mount Moriah, offering up of Isaac on Mount Moriah, and there follows the scourging of Christ, the crowning with thorns, the mockery, and scarlet robe. The most splendid of all the tableaux follows, of Moses raising the brazen serpent in the wilderness. When this is done Christ appears, driven by the mechanical appears. appears, driven by the mob and carry ing His cross. The disciple John and Christ's mother come in from the other side, timorously seaching for Him, not knowing His fate. Her cry of "My son! My Jesus!" when she catches ight of the cross and all in an instant realizes what is before Him, makes the people shudder and breathe hard. Some mothers in the audience sob aloud. She rushes forward and would bear His burden for Him, but is driven away by the soldiers. He staggers and falls beneath His burden and Simon bears it away.

Before the curtain rises again a knocking is heard of driven nails. The two thieves are bound to their crosses, he on the right an old man with a terrified, humble face. man to the left is young, not more than twenty, with a body of the most faultless symmetry-a young Hermes-and a proud, evil, beautiful face. He holds up his head and will not show his pain. The centre cross is not lifted yet one of the soldiers is affixing an in-scription—but immediately they raise it on their shoulders and set it upright. The audience cannot believe its eyes The thorn-crowned figure hangs with nails in its feet and hands. Later it is taken down in full sight of all, but no other means of fastening it there can be seen. No one in Oberammergau can be got to explain this mystery.

The mother comes and sits at the foot of the cross, not weeping nor complaining, gazing in helpless, dry-eyed anguish at the child she has borne beneath her heart, nursed in her Oh, passion of motherhood! bosom. What have not been the agonies you have borne since He created the world? Never anywhere has a blow been struck at man that the weapon was not buried in the heart of some mother. He does not forget her; He says, "Woman, behold thy son!" and beside her kneels the beloved apostle

There are but few words more and then He cries with a loud voice and His head droops forward on His breast. The soldiers break the limbs of the thieves. He of the baughty young a hiss of horror that curdles the heart to hear. So dies the peasant in Galilee "and He being lifted up hath drawn all men after Hin!" Later He is taken down, but first one

goes up and lifting the cruel crown from the helpless head, comes and lays it at the feet of the mother. There is something of pathos in this silent act that, from those who have held their sobs down with teeth on lip, brings forth an uncontrollable burst of tears. He is entombed, but when the curtain rises again the door rolls back, a figure in vapory white stands for an instant against the blackness of the grave and then glides, vanishing, among the rocks.

Again the curtain rises, and slowly He ascends, surrounded by angels.

The audience streams away. There is not a face that has not been washed with tears-that is not pale and grave. They do not talk much, but there are few hearts that have not been, for a while at least, awed out of selfishness. flippancy, or cynicism-have not been stirred to humility and shame by the story of the Passion as acted by Bavarian peasants. - Elizabeth Bisland, in The Cosmopolitan.

Skies at the Crucifixion.

If some astronomical calculations recently made may be believed, the planets which gravitate around the sun will, this month, about Easter-time, be in relatively the same position in the heavens as they were in the spring of 29 A. D., which is the year when Jesus Christ is generally supposed to have been crucified and to have risen from the dead. Not since that time has this coincidence recurred.

sequently, in all these hundreds of years they have never yet moved into the same positions which they occu pied in the month of April, 29 A

D. Neither are they expected by astronomers to be in exactly the same positions as "they were then, for the attraction of other planets and of the sun has caused variations in their respective cycles during these eighteen centuries. It is for this reason that the recurrence of a similar condition of the skies possesses no scientific interest to the astronomer. But to the millions of Christian people all over the world it is an important coincidence that they should see, during Holy Week of this year, the heavenly bodies almost as they were when Christ looked up to them nightly in the rapid succession of events which marked the fortnight preceding His crucifixion.

A LENGEN SERMON.

Men and Women of the Sacred Passion, by the Bishop of Wheeling

A very large congregation listened to the Lenten conference of the Right Rev. Bishop Donahue Sunday night. His subject, "The Men and Women of the Sacred Passion," was so treated as to bring the details of the scenes vividly before his hearers.

He spoke of the usefulness of turning for a time our gaze from the cen tral figure of any great act or move ment and studying the minor characters of the drama. These often show the strength and the weakness of human hearts, the springs of motive, the play of passion, the heavy fall and the rise to grace; in a word because they are of our own clay we feel in them warm, deep and personal interest. Besides the record of their acts is also the inspired word and, in the language of St. Paul, "what things soever were written were written for our

learning."
A commanding figure in the tragedy of Calvary is Peter. He is the embodi-ment of earnestness, fire, faith, all that is big-hearted and broad and manly except in the one great crisis. He uttered the immortal act of faith, "Thou art Christ the Son of the living God!" He was a man of mettle and spokesman in all emergencies. every community, in every parish there are counterparts of Peter, and, despite their faults, we love them. His radical faults were mere natural affection for our divine Lord, an in ability to comprehend the nature of his mission and more than all an overweening confidence in himself. He wanted to die with our Lord ; "though all the world were scandalized in Him he would not be scandalized." Though one against a thousand he drew his sword in defense of his Master, but after that his courage oozed from his finger tips, and, with the other disciples, he fled.

Although, however, Peter's fall was forcordained of God, to show him and all congregations the insufficiency of human strength, still the occasion of that fall was a woman's inquisitiveness and a woman's tongue. The preacher entarged upon this theme, denouncing the meddlesome busy-bodies who go about disturbing the peace of individuals, families, and even nations, setting life-long friends He quoted also the Epistle of St. James, (chap. iii.,) upon the poison of the tongue. Yet this one woman was the sole blot upon her sex in the whole Passion.

Judas for all time stood out the em-bodiment of greed. He was swept from grace, not by some torrent or whirlwind of passion; but the cancer of covetousness began from within, and ate its way silently and stealthily into his very soul. He was a priest, Bishop, apostle, but none of these, with their multitudinous graces, saved him,

nor will it save men now.

Next in order of treatment came St. John, who by the misconceptions and bungling of alleged artists is represented as a long haired, sweet faced effeminate man, but when the lion like grizzly Peter denied and fled and would not venture near the cross, he stood with our dear Mother beneath the very shadow of its arms. So in our own lives. The hour of distress and danger and death reveals the true man and hero. How glorious as a whole is the record of the weaker sex in this tragedy of blood !

"Let me present that beautiful, oh, yes! beautiful character of the crucifixion — St. Mary Magdalene; also Mary Cleophe, St. John and the blessed Mother of Jesus," said the Bishop. He dilated in beautiful and touching words on their fidelity to Christ even to the last-how they stood around the dying Saviour on His hard death bed and were His only faithful friends to the last. He appealed to all to be stead fast to Christ as these were, and amid crosses and trials. He dwelt long on these characters, and showed how they are real types of true Christianity.

There have been great missionaries, con-Each of the heavenly bodies has its own time for making a revolution around the sun, and these times differ widely. The earth, as everybody knows, goes around once every year. Mercury takes but a quarter of that time, while Saturn is employed for nearly thirty years in making a cirble formula for the sun and the sun and these times differ widely. The earth, as everybody knows, goes around once every year. Mercury takes but a quarter of that time, while Saturn is employed for nearly thirty years in making a cirble formula for the formula for the sun and the sun and these times differ widely. The earth, as everybody knows, goes around once every year. Mercury takes but a quarter of that time, while Saturn is employed for nearly thirty years in making a cirble formula for the formula for th